



Aesthetics of the Cold and Gaucha Identity

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Abstract

Gauchos are identified as a people with remarkable singularities and differences: south-rio-grandenses are, before, gauchos and, later, Brazilians. Soil and climate contribute to this identity construction. In this sense, the musician and writer Vitor Ramil highlights the importance of an "aesthetic of the cold", which would characterize this space and its culture. The cold, defining the gaucho (as a significant of sul-rio-grandense), would produce a definitive metaphor, mainly because it touches all inhabitants of Rio Grande do Sul, in its heterogeneity, a pampas and mountain people, native and immigrant indigenous people, rural and urban, of snow and minuano. This work has as main objective to analyze the "aesthetics of the cold". Such a macro-analysis will serve as a specific objective to investigate the Gaucho identity.

Keywords: Aesthetics of Cold; Vitor Ramil; Gaucho; Identity; Style

Introduction

An "aesthetics of cold", according to the musician, composer and writer Vitor Ramil, would characterize Rio Grande do Sul (state of Brazil), its neighbors in the Prata Basin, and its culture: "the defining cold of the gaúcho". The "aesthetics of cold", based on artistic differences, would aim to identify the socio-cultural contingent of the inhabitants of Rio Grande do Sul, "in our heterogeneity" [1], a people of pampa and mountain range, of native and immigrant indigenous peoples, rural and urban, snow and minuano, since Rio Grande do Sul is an important border area, it has a strong presence of European immigrants (mainly Portuguese, Italian and German), while it has a climate of well-defined seasons and a past of wars, even anticipating being a republic, during the reign of the monarchist regime in the country. For Ramil, "it would not be possible to find in another region of the country, as we still cannot, a people more occupied in questioning their own identity than the people of Rio Grande do Sul" [1]. The cold, thus, would produce, according to the author, a defining metaphor, mainly because it touches all the

inhabitants of Rio Grande do Sul.

The main objective of this work is to analyze the "aesthetics of cold", as theoretically outlined by Ramil, and the materialization of this notion in his artistic work – literary and musical. Such macro analysis will serve, as a specific objective, to investigate the Gaucho identity, through the characteristics of the Aesthetics of the Cold as pointed out by Ramil (melancholy, clarity, rigor, conciseness, purity, depth and lightness).

One of the functions of art is to operate as a form of knowledge of reality. In this sense, his study is relevant and important, in view of its social meaning, that is, the possibility of providing the recognition of our identity, with a view to continental integration [2]. Considering that literature played an important role in the construction of the Gaucho identity, its myths and foundations, and understanding this as art, regionalist literature, for example, provides the reader with access to the identity of a regionality. According to Pereira [3], what defines regionalist literature is its focus

on the regional universe and type, shaped (form) from a particularized language. According to Bertussi [2], Gaucho literature cuts the Campanha region as a space – with the rural worker or the rancher – configuring it from a language that privileges the peculiarities of oral speech:

in this campeiro, constituted from the apology of his skill in dealing with cattle, in the domain of nature and in his mastery and courage in warlike disputes, is the germ for the configuration of the exaggeratedly positive image of the gaucho, represented by the cultural myth, segmented in the “centaur of the pampas” and in the “monarch of the coxilhas”, for safety, for the taste for freedom and for the deep anti-monarchist feeling, rooted in the formation of the Rio Grande do Sul. This mythification of the regional type is a cultural response to the pejorative meaning of the word “gaúcho” [2].

In the first official documents of the formation of the state, the people of Rio Grande do Sul are seen as gaudério, that is, a person who does not have a steady job and lives at the mercy of others: they are vagabonds, nomads, who lived in semi-barbaric conditions. With the formation of estancias, the gaucho goes from being a nomad to an aggregate and a pawn: competent workers in the field. This is what Bertussi calls the “regeneration bath” [2]. At the same time, our main myths, which configure the gaucho as “monarch of the coxilhas” and “centaur of the pampas”, as a brave, warrior and honorable being, defender of the land and borders, are “created” by official historiography, allied to the ideology of the ruling classes. Later, this ideology will be the foundation of the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement, which will also propagate the myth of social democracy, soft slavery, “production without work”. Bertussi [2] adds that responsible, in large part, for the resounding popularity of the regionalist movement in Rio Grande do Sul is the California da Canção Nativa de Uruguaiana, a regional music festival held since 1972, in which the composer Vitor Ramil participated, presenting Semeadura, song written with José Fogaça, and today a classic of the genre.

Although somewhat removed from the traditionalism patrolled by the MTG, Californians do not disassociate themselves from the stereotyped ideas of the type that inhabits Rio Grande do Sul, associating them with nativism, an influence of the hippie culture. It is particularly against these ideas that Ramil, through his “aesthetics of the cold”, reacts, seeking to decouple regionalism from its folkloric character (p.16), an aspect that has been little investigated by academic research so far. Ramil, before sketching theoretically, in an essay [1,4], what he calls “aesthetics of cold” – an expression that would designate more precisely the gaucho identity, in addition to the caricatural – launched the musical album Ramilonga – the aesthetics of cold. In this booklet, the musician exposes some expressions that would define the germ of the idea:

Dancing a tango [...] Minuano ice cream clearing the sky, purifying the air, drying the path, defining the landscape [...] João Gilberto whispering Prenda Minha [...] No attempt to be, to sound gaucho [...] No separatism, but no berimbau sewn to a cordona in the center of a flag [...] A great scene, a great thematic unfolding, but always containment, never excess [...] The archaic and the colloquial [...] The intensity of Buenos Aires and the delicacy of the Brazilian [...] song O cold, symbol of RS; the cold that invents in us a counterpart for each defining characteristic of “Brazilians” [...] The defining cold of the gaucho, who is much more Brazilian than he thinks.

In these short but objective expressions, Ramil proposes some ideas that, in his later essay, will be further explored and developed. At the same time, he emphasizes that an aesthetic of cold cannot do without Brazilianness [1] and emphasizes that the “search for an aesthetic of cold, when manifesting itself through a visual image, seemed to react directly to the images of carnival tropical” [1]. There is a “great thematic unfolding”, as in the Baroque works – a movement or style linked to the Brazilian identity –, but without excesses. This paradox, being and not being Brazilian, being Brazilian, but Another Brazilian is an aspect that deserves further investigation, as it can reveal important aspects of our Gaucho identity:

I see Porto Alegre and Rio Grande do Sul as a privileged place for their social and political history and their unique geographical situation. We are the confluence of three cultures, a meeting of coldness and tropicality. What is the basis of our creation and our identity if not this one? We are not at the margin of a center, but at the center of another story [1].

A reading key, then, for the Gaucho identity is the meeting: the confluence of three singularities – the Brazilian, the Uruguayan and the Argentine? It seems that we believe in a certain absolute difference in relation to Brazil so that, as an Other, we can identify with it – it being exotic, so are we. According to Ruben Oliven [5], the assertion of regional identities in Brazil can be seen as a reaction to cultural homogenization and as a way of highlighting cultural differences.

For Adorno [6], the true work of art is the one that displays the open wounds of the always vain struggle to achieve unity. Authentic art shows the contradictions of reality vivid and clear. Your style cannot be harmonic, because harmony would be a lie. Ramil recognizes in the cold a suggestion of Gaucho unity, since this is also multiple and plural. The cold, or the well-defined seasons, with the cold always making us stand out in relation to “tropical Brazil”, would be an identity mark because it differentiates us. Identity and difference that

would produce a look, expressed by a singular aesthetic:

Recognizing myself in the cold and recognizing it in me, I realized that we symbolized each other; I had found in him a suggestion of unity, had drawn aesthetic values from him. I had seen a cold landscape, conceived a cold milonga. If cold was my training, cold would be my reading of the world. I would apprehend the plurality and diversity of this world with the cold identity of my gaze. The expression of this gaze would be an aesthetic of the cold [1].

Ramil [1] feels a bit of “a disciple of those for whom, in Paul Valéry’s description, time doesn’t count; those who are dedicated to a kind of ethics of form, which takes work to infinity. The aesthetics of cold [...] is a journey whose objective is the journey itself” (p.19). In his Theory of Travel, philosopher Michel Onfray highlights:

Ourselves, that’s the big question of the trip. Ourselves and nothing else. Or little more. Certainly, there are many pretexts, occasions and justifications, but in reality we only took the road driven by the desire to set out on our own search with the very hypothetical purpose of finding ourselves again or, who knows, of finding ourselves. [...] The journey supposes an experimentation in us that has to do with exercises customary among ancient philosophers: what can I know about myself? What can I learn and discover about myself if I move from usual places and change my references? [7].

In a similar sense, Italo Calvino [8] points out that “other places are mirrors in the negative. The traveler recognizes how little is his, discovering how much he did not have and what he will not have” (p.29). Similar analyzes of regional identity, other intellectuals did, but of the specific identity of the Italian Colonization Region in the northeast of Rio Grande do Sul, which, in Ramil’s perspective, would also be integrated into the “aesthetics of the cold”. It is interesting to note that these researchers related the inhabitant of the RCI to the characteristic soil of this region, the basalt – Ramil makes the correlation with the climate. Reolon [9] highlights that “if we think about the human type that inhabits these lands, we will notice the difference between the man who inhabits limestone and the one who settles in basalt. The ‘basaltic’ being is a brutish, coarse, solid being, like the earth it inhabits, difficult in contact” (p. 42). Costantin [10], in a similar interpretation, states that “the hardness of the rocks requires a fighting spirit. [...] If instead of sandstone, marble or silver, the earth offers us basalt, let us make this earth, in our own way and with our strength, sandstone, marble and silver” (p.110-111).

They are hermeneutic critiques, with languages and discourses of the observant subjects, but such interpretations, associated with each other and with other interpretations

and other knowledge, theories and knowledge, objectively establish important sources for our self-knowledge, as a Gaucho identity. Candido [11] highlights that:

Criticism is an arbitrary act, if you want to be a creator, not just a registrar. Interpreting is, in large part, using the capacity of agency; since the text is a plurality of virtual meanings, it is to define what was chosen, among others. To this discretion, the critic adds his own language, the images that express his vision, covering with them the skeleton of objectively established knowledge [11].

It is important to remember the relevance of the continuity of studies on regional identity – here specifically the Rio Grande do Sul region, since this region, “since it began to exist, seems to have to reaffirm, at every moment, its effective participation in nationality” [12], and that “the cultural unity of the country will only be enriched with the sum of regional and local diversities [...] It is in the difference, which does not mean divergence, that lies the fascination of exchange” [12]. Analyzing the aesthetics of cold, as a mark that identifies through the texts that outlined it as a concept and matter, is to interpret it as a discourse, read it as a text:

Culture must be seen not as a linguistic code, but as a discourse, as a text. A text that is continuously being produced. The type of procedures one has to adopt to interpret culture is the same type as for interpreting a text. It is discovering what is said in the lines and between the lines [12].

It is known that culture – obviously, even the gaúcha – is in constant transformation and change, adding aspects of other cultures, but, as Pozenato [12] reminds us, “while this form remains, with all the makeup variants, it means that there is an identity” (p.30). In this sense, it is worth looking at what remains. Ramil seems to have rehearsed, sketched an insight exactly in this direction and “much remains to be said about Vitor Ramil’s work, his as an artist, and about his conceptions – especially with reference to the essay and book that guide his language: the aesthetics of cold” [13].

Some questions are pertinent. Seeking to define the Gaucho identity, from an escape from stereotypes and folklore – understood as caricatures and social constructions – Ramil outlines the concept of “cold aesthetics”. It can be said that cold is a (metaphorical) identity mark of southerners, and if it identifies, in what sense? If Vitor Ramil emphasizes that he is dedicated to a “kind of ethics of form”, for whom time – history – does not count, then it could be said that the “aesthetics of cold” is a style (discursive, artistic, cultural, social, subjective) southern, even south-rio-grandense, or just authorial? From these questions, it is intended to clarify, more broadly, how the Gaucho identity is constituted and characterized, that is, what identifies and, therefore, differentiates the Gaucho. And, therefore, clarifying what the

aesthetics of cold is: does cold have its own aesthetic (is it an appearance or a constancy, in a way?) or, in another sense, does it make possible a singular poetics?.

Identity, Style, Sinthome

One way of thinking about Being, its identity and its difference, and even fantasy and symbolic identifications, is through art, pointed out by Heidegger [14] as a place of Truth (aletheia), as unveiling, un-concealing: “ §204 – Art is not taken as a field of cultural achievement or as a manifestation of the Spirit. It belongs to the poetic-appropriating happening (Ereignis), from which the ‘sense of Being’ is determined” [14].

The work of art makes known what the tool really is: the exhibition on shoes painted by Van Gogh leads Heidegger to define the essence of art as putting oneself into the work of the truth of being (§55 and §65) [14]. It is even possible to identify the concept of Degree Zero of Being with that of Truth of the German hermeneutician. For him (§130), truth is non-truth insofar as it belongs to the scope of provenance of the not-yet-revealed, in the sense of veiling (care, guard, conservation, protection: safeguarding and letting happen).

In this sense, singular – symphony – sinthome are a triptych of the univocity of Being, of a symbolic of unity, of difference in a pure state, which identifies the subject, and does not allow for mimicry or representation. In the beginning it is the visàge, it is the Gaze of the Other: it is the otherness that constitutes the Subject. It is through this first mirror image that the Subject takes place. Without her, he remains the amorphous, the nothing, an as-everyone, no difference, no identity.

Therefore, the subject, according to Lacan [15], is an assumption, and is always given over to an ambiguity: “the subject is always not only double, but divided” (p.30), because it is inscribed in an idealization of the Other and in their own idealization, constituting and structuring, which take place in the fundamental exchange: symbolic, signifying marks, whose meaning will depend on the subjectivation/desubjectivation of the singularity in relation to the Other. The subject is a fundamental conjugation of three registers - Real, Symbolic and Imaginary - founded by a structural sinthome, which is an expressiveness of this subjectivation, different from symptom, as a behavioral manifestation, but different from the subject, Art of this: “In which Can the artifice expressly aim at what initially presents itself as sinthome? In which art, craftsmanship, can undo, if I may say so, what imposes itself on the sinthome? Namely, the truth” [15]. In other words, art is a manifestation of difference [9,16]. The concept of sinthome, as described, was formulated twenty years before in a different way by Lacan, but still fruitful in the

issues of the constitution of subjectivity and singularization: “the symptom is a metaphor, whether you want to say it or not , just as desire is a metonymy, even if man makes fun of it” [17].

It is from these questions that Lacan [15] will deduce that art intends, in a divinatory way, to substantiate the sinthome in its consistency, in its ex-sistence (symbolization) and in its hole (lack). Finding a meaning is precisely the function of the sinthome: it implies knowing what the knot is (how the nodulation is configured, in the Subject, among its registers), amending the latter thanks to an artifice. It is not exactly an artificiality, a simulation, but a symbolization, a fundamental action for the entry into the Symbolic, into language, into the Human condition itself. Without this “artifice”, there is a concreteness that does not allow a relationship and, therefore, an a-society.

Ramil [18], when thinking about the aesthetics of cold as a journey – not in space, but in the interior – metaphorically expresses this thought: “Sometimes the place we want to reach is exactly where we are, but we need to take a long come back to find him” (p.50).

It is, in these terms, that art, in its different manifestations and expressions – visual, musical, literary, scenic – is a writing, an unveiling of the Truth, because it is the inauguration of meaning, and, more specifically, the writing of a sinthome, of a singularity, of a univocal subjectivity, difference in a pure state, instance of art in and of the Subject, or, in other terms, as a style of singularity, unveiling of the Subject’s truth:

Among all the problems of artistic creation, the one that most imperatively requires – and even for the artist himself, we believe – a theoretical solution, is that of style [...] the artist, in effect, will conceive of style as the fruit of a rational choice, an ethical choice, an arbitrary choice, or even a felt need whose spontaneity is imposed against any control, or even that it is convenient to release it through a negative asceticism” [19].

As Brandão [20] highlights, starting from Buffon’s aphorism, “the style is the man”, Lacan [17] questions precisely this “the man”, as a no longer so secure reference. Later, he affirms the impossibility of man having a ‘total personality’, since the game of displacement and condensation, of metaphors and metonymies, to which he is destined, in the exercise of his functions, marks his relationship between the subject and the signifier. (p.269). For Brandão [20], the issue of style is always linked to repetition and difference, norm and deviation. However, repetition is always already a difference, the same is already different, since there is time, there is history, and now is always repetition, but updating of the repeated, of the primordial scene, which is why it is

different.

For Lacan, style is in a position of the subject, of singularity. Style works as a support for the subject between truth (always elusive, always not-all) and knowledge (what the subject apprehends from the truth). As Iannini [21] recalls, for the French psychoanalyst, style shows what cannot be said: "style, defined from the fall of the object, seen as an index of a certain relationship with desire [..]. Every relation of desire to an object presupposes a phantasmatic relation" (p.140-142). Since it "shows" the unsaid, the inapprehensible, the style is based on a tension, turned to exteriority.

This is not an individuality, this impossible. Once again, let us remember that there is no Subject without Other; therefore there is no individual, isolated, that has unrecognizable attributes in other individualities. A Subject is only based on the marks instituted by the Other. What he, as a Desired Subject, does with these brands in his social and personal contacts (in search of himself) is what we can call individuality. By imprinting individuality on himself, he acquires Style. In Lacan, style takes on an important conceptual function, as it allows the exposure of the way a singularity is produced without imposing itself as an irreducible particularity: "Style is a fundamental way of formalizing the demand for recognition, for the realization of expectations of authenticity and for real. In this sense, it is what a subject is most real" [21]. Style, in this position, breaks with representation, with alienation, and even epistemologically, it shares nothing with the metaphysics of the self, with scientisms or relativisms.

The style, if we can say so, is. The uniqueness is the style. The "theoretical solution" imperative to the artistic field - the problem of style - is closely linked to the critique of metalanguage which, according to Lacan, implies the ethical engagement of the subject in relation to the act and the need to move incessantly from the supposed social representations naming it, de-alienating itself, seeking its style, its difference and singularity, then its constituent Desire. Even because, as Ramil [18] said, "we are preliminarily ignorant of our things and pejoratively careless to know them, to love them" (p.54).

It is for this set of reasons that Lacan names the passion of not wanting to know about desire, the passion of creating a metalanguage to represent the truth in the stability of the utterance, as sleazy, eliminating the real difference between utterance and utterance, between desire and its representation. [...] The expression "fall of the object" seems to designate something quite different from the realization of fantasy, which Lacan called the crossing of fantasy. Going through fantasy is to empty the object of the imaginary consistency that guaranteed it this determining place in the

forms of enjoyment proper to a subject. It is, therefore, to give place to the object as the cause of desire, no longer of morbid jouissance. Falling from the object means, therefore, loss of enjoyment. [...] The fall of constitutive identifications of the self as a corollary of this process is a precondition for the object, and not the self, to emerge through style [21].

Unveiling a being, explaining its identity - in the sense commonly understood by common sense -, seeking its imaginary fantasies and its symbolic identifications, the *sinthome*, thus, is trying to apprehend the style of a singularity. This is what we seek, similarly, when analyzing the *gaucho*, through the Aesthetics of the Frio, by Vitor Ramil, in contrast to all the stereotype and caricature that marked him in his history, questioning whether that is the style of the *gaucho* - or whether traditionalism would be. In another sense, if the *gaucho* is identified with traditionalism, with the platinum *gaucho*, with references that are strange or similar to being Brazilian, foreign or border, how is the *gaucho* phantastically constituted, what are their symbolic identifications, how is the south? *grandense* on these issues.

The Originary and Visual Landscape of the Aesthetics of the Cold

The first version of *Estética do Frio* was born in 1992, in a collection organized by Luís Augusto Fischer and Sergius Gonzaga, *Nós, os gaúchos* (which was later continued with a second volume dedicated to the theme), bringing together different artists, researchers and journalists around the question of the identity of the people of Rio Grande do Sul. It was Fischer who learned of the ideas that Vitor Ramil had been developing and encouraged their publication. Ramil highlighted in interviews given to the press that the *Estética do Frio* is not a movement, it does not intend to establish itself as a theory that solves the identity or even aesthetic issue of Rio Grande do Sul; he did not even intend to write a manifesto. In a later essay [1], Ramil elaborates further on the incipient ideas inscribed in the 1992 text. In this, however, he continues to think that "the aesthetics of cold is not intended, under any circumstances, as a normative formulation. The ideas [...] are the result of my intuition and what my experience recognizes as common sense" (p.8). Philosophically, Ramil moves away from the normative formulation and approaches the explanatory formulation. It is true that this aesthetic concept, although built with the intention of serving his work, took on proportions that were certainly not expected by the artist and came to be seen as an important gesture to answer questions that inhabitants of the state came (and still are) making.

The Aesthetics of Cold has its origins in a feeling of exile. Ramil moved to Rio de Janeiro in 1985 and stayed there until 1991: that was the germ of this insight, exactly in

June, a month that, in southern Brazil, is cold and marks the beginning of lower temperatures, with greater intensity. On a TV news program, Ramil watched two faces of a Brazil: the bubbly, warm and euphoric face of an out-of-season carnival taking place in the northeast (presented as a not-too-dystopian fact) and the face of southern Brazil, cold and icy, presented as a strange fact, something of “European climate”. In Rio de Janeiro, where Ramil was, it was hot, and he reports that he is watching the news only in shorts; however, the emotional feeling was one of exile: the musician preferred to be in the south, a much more intimate landscape, and he could not imagine himself behind an electric trio.

This scenario made Ramil begin to question which images would do justice to the question of identity in Rio Grande do Sul. Because, until now, the nationally dissipated image linked to the signifier “gaucho” is that of the “pilchado” gaucho, iconographically connected to traditionalism – or to a past of a rural man – which, for Ramil, is an imaginary created and reinforced, including by the media, it is a “museum piece”, and, certainly, “it is not a total image of our identity” [22], but only a suggestion of part of it. This standardized, schematic, ideological relationship that we maintain with our imagination leads to a caricatured expression and, in the artist’s conception, “to the replacement of the author by the character” [1]:

The remoteness – either unconscious or ideological – from Rio Grande do Sul makes it the place in Brazil that can most easily be defined in two or three reductive ideas, while its subtleties of style seem unfathomable. [...] Watching the *Jornal Nacional*, I realized that above the clichés commonly used to define us, above any reductive idea – which always represent clippings, fragments of reality –; that above our subtleties of style was the fundamental difference between the south and the rest of Brazil – as a non-reducing, first and unquestionable symbol, encompassing all the others –: the cold. [...] The cold symbolized Rio Grande do Sul. I came to see cold as a broadly defining metaphor for the gaucho [4].

In the 2004 essay, Ramil highlights that the cold is the great difference between “us” and “the Brazilians”. And the size of the difference goes beyond the fact that nowhere in Brazil is it as cold as in the South:

Because it is an emblem of a climate of well-defined seasons – of our own, intimate seasons; for determining our culture, our habits, or moving our economy; for being identified with our landscape; for setting both the existence-almost-Romanesque of Rio Grande do Sul, as well as the Rio Grande do Sul and everything that is not strange to it; that’s why the cold, despite not being exclusively ours, distinguishes us from other regions of Brazil. The cold, a natural phenomenon always present in the national media’s agenda and, at the

same time, a metaphor capable of talking about us in a comprehensive and defining way, symbolizes Rio Grande do Sul and is symbolized by it [1].

In this sense, the origin of the Aesthetics of Cold is the search for a distance from stereotypes. Rubira [13] knew how to define this search, emphasizing that “distancing oneself from the stereotype is to open the necessary space to search for those singularities” (p.111), those subtleties of style pointed out by Ramil who, intuitively, linked to the identity issue. Investigating our subtleties of style is to get closer to our singularities, implying a recognition of who we are, distancing ourselves from caricatures and masks that, imposed or not by others, are reinforced or affirmed by us, which ends up “foreigning” us even more than what is close to us – or what, at least, it could be: not only the Brazilianness, but even the internal differences between the inhabitants of Rio Grande do Sul, besides the gaucho of the border, the gaucho of the pampa, the traditionalist gaucho when thinking about the identifications of the gauchos, Ramil recalls that many gauchos claim to be more “porteños” than Brazilians. However, the artist also points out that, although we may be more attentive to cold characteristics – more linked to Uruguayan and Argentine neighbors – and less to warm ones (carnival and happy), this identification with the “hermanos” is also illusory:

This is bullshit. It happens because these people never spent a month in Buenos Aires to see how Brazilian we are. Well, the Argentines have a rigidity that we don’t have. At the same time, we have a toughness that you don’t find in Bahia or Rio. So, we are the midfield, the confluence of various cultures. We are different from the rest of Brazil, but at the same time we are Brazilian. I have no problem with that. On the contrary: I think this convergence of cultures is a privilege [23].

This convergence of cultures is understood by Ramil as a dual personality – or, in other words, a dual citizenship, according to Rubira [13]. Reolon [9], when alluding to the use of language, the dialect language used by Italian immigrants, highlights that they would bring in this characteristic language a present Other. Italy, the original Italian would/ would function as Other for the immigrant, constituting a Desiring Subject, with Italian marks. Perhaps the Brazilian gaucho also establishes himself as a Subject “begotten” of the platinum Other, the “gaucho”, with “marks” of it.

More than a duplicity of something that is fundamental in the constitution of a singularity, this convergence is an encounter: an encounter and a confluence of languages. For Ramil, “we are a hybrid of the condition of Brazilianness and platininity”, in which “melancholy and lightness meet”, according to Rubira [13]. Making this meeting of cultures

a source of creation is the great key to thinking about Cold Aesthetics. This is because, according to Ramil [4], we thus abandon subordination to the center of the country, unveil identity traits and affirm them in singularity (which we could think of as a de-alienation of an imposed imaginary and the search for the discovery of our unary trait), discontinuing uncertainties in the artistic field, which sometimes asserts itself in the regional (reinforcing stereotypes), sometimes in the Brazilian (linking to an aesthetic that is not ours), sometimes in the world (in a globalizing, massifying and homogenizing, destroying identities and singularities), in an eclecticism inherited from the degeneration of tropicalism “as a style, as a posture” [4].

It is clear that, with the *Estética do Frio*, Ramil does not intend any separatism or independence of Rio Grande do Sul in relation to Brazil, nor does he even see the aesthetic superiority of one to the detriment of the other. Ramil adds that we, gauchos, impose a diet of Brazilianness, while we also impose a gaucho diet on Brazilians, reducing ourselves to a narrow and caricatured vision, to a “folkloric” expression.

By emphasizing that the aesthetics of cold must assert itself, in order to react to vagueness and eclecticism, it also seems to want to add another voice to Brazilianness, which is also often caricatured and stereotyped. Rio Grande do Sul as the center of another story, no longer on the sidelines, does not imply a detachment from Brazil, nor a link to neighboring countries, but rather a conversation, a meeting. For this reason, Ramil reacts to the “degeneration” of tropicalism and not to itself, it seems to us, because it is in this movement that, perhaps, the Aesthetics of Frio foresees similarities, as an ideal, not in terms of artistic content, but precisely in form, since both – *Tropicália* and *Estética do Frio* – were or are constituted as aesthetic conceptions of ruptures of form with respect to constructed and alienated images. In Ramil’s words, it is this dedication to the ethics of form (thought by Paul Valéry) that leads to infinite work. We understand that an infinite work is one that always reinvents itself, never repeats itself: it constitutes a style, when it employs a signature, but it is always in transformation, research, travel and in search of itself. For the Argentine writer Jorge Luís Borges, a great influence of Vitor Ramil, infinite is the concept that corrupts and alters all the others, whose extension dissolves into the density of the infinitesimal.

In an interview given to the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper [24], the composer joins *Estética do Frio* to Brazil, stating that, in his album *Ramilonga* – the aesthetics of cold, he did “on purpose this Caetano bias, which is actually the of bossa nova. The regional singing of the south, coarse and shouted, of macho gaucho, bothered me a lot. Why can’t I sing softly, delicately? I forced the bar to sing ‘joãoilbertianamente’, and I keep that in [on the record]

Tambong” [24]. This affiliation, or identification, with the convergence of tropicality and platinity, with the confluence of Brazilian and platinum cultures (Uruguay and Argentina), does not exclude tradition, because this is never a mistake in the artist’s conception. We could say that tradition reveals distinctive traits of a singularity, but we also believe with Husserl that “tradition is the oblivion of origins”, as it asserts itself in a disempowerment, maintaining itself without constant self-questioning, at the heart of the search for a singularized style. Ramil seems to walk in this direction when he remembers that “to be alive, tradition must be justified in contemporary expression – and it will be justified even if the new represents a rupture” [4]. Tradition must not be a burden to be borne, nor a heap of formulas to be repeated. It is in this sense that Ramil seeks to escape stereotyping, without ignoring traditionalism, the peculiar language, the gaudéria themes, especially when he gives musicality to João da Cunha Vargas’ compositions.

It is interesting to note that the Aesthetics of Cold, for Ramil [1], is a journey, whose objective is the journey itself, as a reaction to a paralyzing state of affairs, with the conviction that “an artistic conception requires freedom of movement and the oxygen of the course of events to survive” (p.19), exactly against the current of traditionalism, in a sense of cultural stagnation, since, for him, “taking on a character to assert one’s own identity is, in fact, weakening it” (p.26).

This journey, which the Aesthetics of Cold is, becomes a journey into the interior. In this sense, it is not exactly cold as a climate, season, but a metaphor for it: a journey to the inner seasons, to the climate of singularity, which expresses in the intimate, therefore cold, and not in the heat, which is characteristic of the ecstasy, of the ecstasy, of the ecstatic, of what is projected: it is a trip to oneself and not a move outward, to the other. Therefore, the melancholic and introspective atmosphere that defines itself, interesting to observe, as a visual image: “in its high definition as an image – the well-defined figure of the gaucho, the clear sky, the immense field of regular green, the straight line of the horizon” [1]. The search for an aesthetic of the cold, when manifested through a visual image (“the clear sky over an extensive and green southern plain, where a solitary gaucho, sheltered by a wool poncho, took his mate, thoughtfully, his eyes put on the horizon” [p.19]), reacted directly to the images of the tropical carnival, to those that Vitor Ramil had seen in Rio de Janeiro, which provoked in the artist a feeling of estrangement, the feeling of exile, and which gave rise to the questioning of the Aesthetics of the Frio . This image and the milonga materialize the Cold Aesthetics:

What other form would be appropriate to the sharpness of the silences, the voids? In its entirety and essentiality, the milonga, like the image, was opposed to excess, to redundancy. Intense and

extensive, both tended towards horizontality. The cold corresponded to them, sharpening their senses, stimulating concentration, withdrawal, intimacy, defining their contours in such a way as to emphasize their properties: rigor, depth, clarity, conciseness, purity, lightness, melancholy [1].

In an interview prior to the 2004 essay, Ramil had already linked the *Estética do Frio* to a landscape, to a visual image:

You see the southern landscape, the pampa: that is unbelievable, it's touching! You are mute driving in the middle of that field, the silence, that smooth, regular thing. Tends to conciseness, perfection, clarity, purity. That classic image of the gaucho drinking his mate, looking at the landscape, singing a milonga, reflecting on the milonga. For me, these are fundamental things, it's our aesthetics, the essence, the center, the Aesthetics of Cold [23].

An art consistent with this nomenclature is one that, beyond and below a regional, becomes universal, becomes felt and lived in a universal way, not only in the environment from which it emerged, but universally (redundant like this, because it is necessary like this if it does!). The Aesthetics of Cold in this way becomes a universal born in the regional.

Final Considerations

It is important to emphasize that the issue of identity is complex, even complicated, a theme dear to contemporaneity, and interdisciplinary. Our choice to enter into this thorny theme, which after globalization takes on new contours (just remember the studies by Stuart Hall and Canclini), was psychoanalysis, especially Lacanian, which proposes a return to Freud – since, according to Lacan, this is he had misrepresented it by emphasizing the ego, not this, the dimension of the unknown, whose Other is at the heart. This was our assumption: there is no Subject without Other, therefore identity is built and reconstructed in this dialectic that is based on difference. In this sense, we tried not to establish exactly what the Gaucho identity would be, since this is an impossibility: Rio Grande do Sul, or the Gaucho, are fictional. However, this has not stopped the investigation of the significant insistence, the truth that is at stake in this fiction. We were thus interested in a symptomatic from Rio Grande do Sul. We look for what could be our unary trait, differentiating signifier, through visual art. Based on the understanding that Vitor Ramil's *Estética do Frio* can answer our questions about the uniqueness of Rio Grande do Sul, then the chosen visual art was the reference for the musician and composer, and embodied in his own work, of a figurability that converts writing into visuality.

Searching for style, therefore, is a task that involves

the observation of the analyzed poetics, of a constancy of discourse, a formal constancy, based on symbolic identifications and imaginary fantasies. As we tried to demonstrate, art as the unveiling of Truth, the writing of a *sinthome*, is inseparable from the definition of Subject and Being. What is, then, Being Gaucho, his style as singularity?.

It's modern. But not modern, much less postmodern. He knows himself to think self-sufficient, but not yet to declare himself surpassed. In fact, it still figures between romanticism and modernism, in a certain blurring between an incipient impressionism and the *avant-garde*, between a terrifying and sublime position with transcendence/nature and autonomy.

Less attentive to traditionalism – which links identity with clothing, country style, its work, songbook and peculiar language – and more to a light-melancholic, introspective aesthetic at the center between platinum and Brazilian, thus confluent of trends, movements, styles and repertoires.

Its progressive rejection of all historical conventions to deal only with the specific constituents of its environment, identifying itself with the tendency towards pure artistry: the style of being gaucho is post-romantic and quasi-modern. Always in search of its “zero degree”, its original, and with the desire to found new languages, to be ahead:

The essence of modernism lies in using the methods of a discipline to critique that discipline, not in order to subvert it, but to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence [...] Modernism, in this direction, made the painting more aware of itself.¹

Thus, in an incessant search for their identity, always self-asserting, independent, proud and, at times, even arrogant. In modernism, each art would become “pure”, and in this “purity would find the guarantee of its quality standards, as well as its independence”. Purity, purism, anxiety about his destiny, concern for his identity, this gaucho is modern.

The gaucho does not ignore his past, he even boasts about it, he thinks of tradition as important and as a facet of himself, but it does not stop there. As such, it is also modern, that is, it implies an “intelligible continuity of taste and tradition”. In the highlight of Couto [25,26], “vanguard is the updated form, in movement, which takes tradition to resist cultural decay” (p.101):

Modernism never intended anything like a break with the past. It can mean a transition, an overcoming of tradition, but it also means the extension of its evolution. Modernist art establishes continuity with

¹ This and the other quotes below, if not referenced, are from (Greenberg, p.101-110).

the past without hiatus or rupture.

In a dialectical process, and as a counter-current movement, sometimes with inflexible traditionalists, sometimes with ruptures that despise the past, the gaucho sometimes goes back to Romanticism. And, as such, it hides the function of its environment, "as if the artist were ashamed to admit that, in fact, he painted his painting instead of having generated it in a dream". Nature is still supreme and he is nothing in front of her: the pampa, the minuano and the horse are at its heart. But it is also autonomous, proclaims itself superior and independent of Brazil, of its European, African, indigenous, and other states' origins, in a "progressive surrender to the resistance of its environment; This resistance consists, above all, in the categorical denial that the painting's plan opposes to the efforts made to cross it in search of a perspective-realist space".

Not seeking consensus, a symptom that manifests itself in the way we relate to each other and to "foreigners", the generalized crisis in economic policy, the past of wars that reverberates in violence and intolerance. Such characteristics also link us to modernism, whose informality is striking. This informality is often confused [27] with inconsistency – the inability to achieve integrity of form. But informality is the irregularity of form, reverberated in the differences that also distinguish and identify us, and that incur in unity, without unification (homogenization) [28-42].

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